

CAPITOL STUFF

By STAN CARTER

Washington, June 13—Chatting with a small group of reporters aboard Air Force One on the way home from the Moscow summit, presidential adviser Henry A. Kissinger predicted overwhelming congressional approval of the nuclear missile accords this August if they were "explained properly."

Advance indications as President Nixon sent the accords to Capitol Hill today were that they would sail through the Congress as Kissinger predicted, despite loud opposition by Sen. Henry M. Jackson (D-Wash.) and a few others.

Henry K May Be Snag in Way of Summit Pact OK

Administration strategists figured there would be fewer than 20 votes against Senate ratification of the treaty limiting U.S. and Soviet anti-ballistic missile systems and that a big majority in both houses would vote to endorse the interim pact freezing the two countries' offensive missile arsenals.

The five-year interim pact is an executive agreement that would not ordinarily require congressional approval but Nixon asked for "an expression of support from both houses of the Congress" for it.

But the process of "properly explaining" the accords to Congress may very well take longer than Kissinger anticipated—possibly because of a side issue almost certain to be raised involving the presidential adviser himself.

Even though sentiment in Congress appears overwhelmingly in favor of the strategic arms limitation agreements, the lawmakers won't want to buy a pig in a poke. There will be lengthy committee hearings in both houses, probing into all the details and ramifications of the accords.

Most likely the administration will trot out as witnesses Gerard C. Smith, the chief U.S. negotiator in the 2½ years of arms limitation talks, Secretary of State William P. Rogers, Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird, and perhaps CIA Director Richard Helms and the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

But Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman J. William Fulbright (D-Ark.), for one, will surely at least go through the motions of demanding that Kissinger also testify. And on this issue, many Senators will support him.

After all, why shouldn't Kissinger testify in support of the nuclear arms accords? It was in his shop in the White House—much more than in the State Department—that the basic U.S. approach to the SALT negotiations was originally formulated.

The President, of course, made the key decisions. And the day-to-day negotiations in Vienna and Helsinki were conducted by Smith and his team of diplomats.

But everything revolved around Kissinger. When the crunch came in Moscow on May 26—with one last hang-up still to be resolved over a formula for trading in old missiles for new ones—it was settled at a meeting in the Kremlin with Kissinger and three members of his staff, on one side, and Soviet Deputy Prime Minister Smirnov, Foreign Minister Gromyko and two aides

A Matter of Historic Principle

But it is a matter of historic principle in the White House that congressional questioning of presidential assistants would violate the confidential relationships between a President and his assistants.

There have been a few exceptions in the past. Sherman Adams, President Eisenhower's chief of staff, went to Capitol Hill to defend himself after he was implicated in political scandal. And last April, White House assistant Peter Flanigan testified, on a severely limited basis, about his alleged role in the ITT controversy.

But generally, White House aides have invoked the cloak of executive privilege to refuse congressional demands for their testimony.

The White House avoided giving a direct answer today when asked if an exception might be made in this particular case because of Kissinger's key role in the arms negotiations.

It's Likely to Cause Disgruntlement

"I haven't, quite frankly, heard any discussion along that line," was all that press secretary Ronald Ziegler would say.

But other administration sources said executive privilege was such a basic principle that they could not imagine the White House waiving it to permit testimony by Nixon's national security adviser under any foreseeable circumstances.

This is likely to cause disgruntlement on Capitol Hill, which could delay the ratification hearings.

But there is little likelihood that the Congress could force his testimony, silly as the claim of executive privilege might seem after four on-the-record press conferences given by Kissinger in the Soviet Union.

Thus, a press conference that Kissinger gave in a dimly lit Moscow night club from 1 to 1:45 a.m. on the morning after the missile accords were signed probably was the most rigorous public questioning that the presidential adviser will face on the accords.

"We believe that the overwhelming majority of the Senate, once it recognizes the nature of the agreement, the long-range implications of the agreement, and its character, will vote for it," he said then.

"We have not come out on the short end of the stick"



Henry Kissinger
Will Senate summon him?